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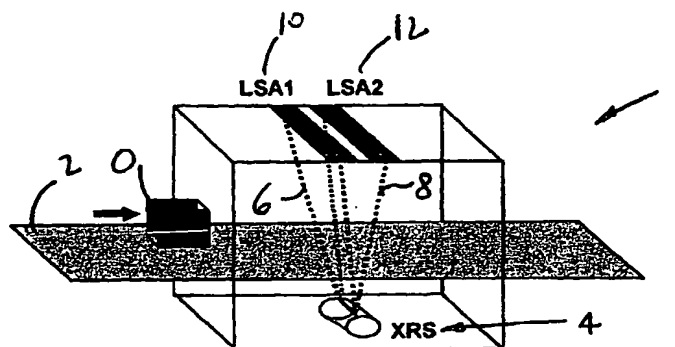
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(54) Title: STEREOSCOPIC X-RAY IMAGING APPARATUS FOR OBTAINING THREE-DIMENSIONAL COORDINATES



(57) Abstract: A screening device (1) for use in scanning objects for security checking or medical observation includes an X-ray source (4) providing two beams (6, 8) for projection at the object, a linear sensor array (10, 12) being provided for each beam whereby an intensity map and a motion map is generated to provide depth information from which a 3D image can be generated and viewed.

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STEREOSCOPIC X-RAY IMAGING APPARATUS FOR
OBTAINING THREE-DIMENSIONAL COORDINATES

5 [0001] This invention concerns improvements in or relating to screening apparatus and in particular although not exclusively has reference to security screening apparatus.

10 [0002] It is well known to scan people and objects non-intrusively to ascertain their interior structures or contents and to identify areas of potential hazard or danger in either the medical or security sense.

15 [0003] Conventionally, X-ray equipment has successfully been used for these purposes, but in recent years there has become an increasing need to provide more comprehensive, in particular three-dimensional images than those provided by the two-dimensional X-ray. For example, in the medical field CT scanning has been introduced to provide detailed mapping of various parts of the body on an intensive basis, namely by providing cross-sectional images. However, such scanning procedures involve the use of very costly
20 equipment and are extremely expensive to operate.

25 [0004] In the security field the adoption of CT scanning is clearly an option but its cost implications render it an unlikely candidate for adoption.

30 [0005] One of the problems attendant upon conventional X-ray security scanning is its limitation in terms of being unable *per se* to provide detailed imaging of baggage contents particularly when they are stacked for example in a suitcase since they are superimposed one on the other and the images are thus occluded.

[0006] One previous attempt to provide a security scanning device using X-ray technology is that taught by *Robinson* in European Patent Application 0 261 984 in which he proposes a binocular stereoscopic X-ray inspection system. His system involves the inspection of objects passing successively under two X-ray beams, and over two respective line-array detectors upon which the beams fall. The two beams are set at an angle to one another in the plane parallel to the path of movement so as to capture left and right perspective views of each object on the line-scan principle. The views are stored in respective frame stores the video information from which they are displayed stereoscopically on a special monitor. . This procedure, however, requires the use of electro-optic viewing spectacles which are controlled by the video system. Accordingly the 3D image is generated essentially by the operator rather than by the scanning equipment as such.

[0007] It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved method of scanning and a scanning device therefor which affords a 3D image viewing capability in the absence of any special interactive equipment dedicated to use by the operator and independent of the perceptual system of the operator creating the depth information.

[0008] According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of scanning including the steps of projecting two X-ray beams towards a moving or static object, sensing the images generated from the X-ray beams, detecting two spatial dimensions from the images, developing motion and intensity maps from the two spatial dimensions thereby to generate by the use of algorithms the third spatial dimension and to provide a data set for the construction of a 3D image for display on a viewing monitor.

5 [0009] In the case of static images generated by two line scanners, the disparity map for the intensity maps is calculated from two parallel detector arrays and converted into depth coordinates using conventional stereo-algorithms and the fixed geometry of the equipment, giving two image arrays representing views from different angles. Trucco & Verri 1998, Introductory Techniques for 3D Computer Vision, Prentice Hall Publications, New Jersey provide some software solutions for stereo vision in this context.

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15 [00010] In the case of a moving object, for example being carried by a conveyor belt, due to the motion of the objects on the conveyor belt, the disparity information can be replaced by time delay information. In one embodiment of the present invention the method includes the steps of developing the third spatial dimension from moving representations of the flat screened object by calculating motion parallax maps for the intensity map which can be converted into depth coordinates using the fixed geometry of the conveyor belt or calibration markers on the belt.

20

25 [00011] In both cases the data set is generated and comprises 3D-coordinates for all visible object contours from which parallel projections in the three cardinal directions can be constructed. In a further development software may be provided to allow real-time rotation of the 3D data set to permit continuous manipulation of the viewing angle by the operator.

30 [00012] Algorithms may be incorporated in the computer software to allow the 3D images of the scanned object stored in the computer memory to be transferred into projection images, such as top, side, or front elevations using trigonometric transformations such for

example as Euler transformations. The same algorithms allow the adoption of any viewing angle, controlled by the operator, for instance by means of a joystick, the two degrees of freedom of the joystick determining the elevation and azimuth of the viewing perspective, namely of the projection plane. Proprietary polygonal object modelling and rendering techniques may additionally be used to enhance visualisation. For example those disclosed by Foley et al 'Computer Graphics, Principles and Practice', Addison Wesley, 1997.

[00013] According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a X-ray scanning device for a static or moving object including an X-ray source providing two or more X-ray beams, and a sensor array provided for each beam, the arrays being displaced spatially one from the other, the arrays being adapted to generate two two-dimensional images, a computer incorporating software adapted to calculate a third, depth dimension thereby to create a 3D image of the object, and a monitor for displaying the 3D image.

[00014] The scanning device may incorporate a conveyor belt for carrying the object for scrutiny and the sensor arrays are spatially disposed to capture two images of the moving object to generate an intensity map and a motion map.

[00015] The conveyor belt may be provided with calibration markers to provide a self-calibrating system.

[00016] By way of example only one method of scanning an object and a device therefor according to the invention are described below with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

[00017] Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of the device; and

[00018] Figure 2 is a sketch showing the geometric analysis of the method.

5 [00019] Referring to the drawings, there is provided an X-ray scanning device 1 employed for the security scanning of baggage, the device being associated with a conveyor belt 2 beneath which is disposed an X-ray source 4 for projecting two non-parallel X-ray beams 6, 8 upwardly through the belt 2, the angle between the
10 beams 6, 8 determining the quality of 3D reconstruction.

[00020] A linear sensor array 10, 12 designated LSA1 and LSA2 is provided above the belt for sensing each of the beams 6, 8 respectively, the arrays being spatially separated one from the
15 other.

[00021] The time that the projection of an object O needs to be shifted from LSA1 to LSA2, Δt depends on the perpendicular distance D between the X-ray source 4, XRS, and the object.
20

[00022] In use an object O is carried on the conveyor belt 2 and is subjected to the X-ray beams 6, 8. The object O is travelling with the speed of the conveyor belt VCB across a distance Δx in a time interval Δt , determined by $VCB = \Delta x / \Delta t$. The projection of O on the image plane defined by the two sensor arrays LSA1 and LSA2,
25 in the same time interval Δt travels across the distance ΔLSA , leading to an image speed $VLSA = \Delta LSA / \Delta t$. Similar triangles relate the object distance from XRS, X-ray source 4, D, and the height of the sensors above XRS, H, by the equations $\Delta x / D = \Delta LSA / H$ and $VCB / D = VLSA / H$. From this relationship the
30

object distance $D = H * VCB/VLSA$ can be derived from the known height H and conveyor belt speed VCB by measuring image speed $VLSA$.

5 [00023] By taking into account these simple geometrical
relationships, depth can therefore be reconstructed from the input
signals of two corresponding sensors in the line cameras, using
simple motion detector algorithms that can be cheaply implemented
10 in 1D or 2D-arrays, see for example *Zanker et al* 1999 'Speed
tuning in elementary motion detectors of the correlation type'
Biological Cybernetics 80, 109-116 and *Zanker et al* 1997 'A two-
dimensional motion detector model (2DMD) responding to artificial
and natural image sequences' *Investigative Ophthalmology and*
15 *Visual Science* 38, S 936. A further reference of interest is
concerned with biologically motivated motion detection algorithms:
recovering motion by detecting spatiotemporal correlation
(Reichardt, 1961 "Autocorrelation, a principle for the evaluation of
sensory information by the central nervous system", in *Sensory*
Communication Ed Rosenblith, pp 303-317

20

[00024] The representation quality may be improved by a number of additional steps, such as using more than two input elements, or by optimising the source-sensor geometry.

25 **[00025]** It is to be understood other speed algorithms may be employed in the practice of the invention such as those commonly used in machine vision, thus for example:

[00026] Conventional machine vision
approach: matching image regions by determining the displacement
maximising the correlation between two image regions (Benayoun,
Ayache, 1998, Dense Non-Rigid Motion Estimation in Sequences

of Medical Images Using Differential Constraints,
Int.J.Comp.Vision 26 25-40).

[00027] Gradient-type motion detection
algorithms: recovering speed by means of filters solving the
5 general motion equation (Srinivasan, 1990, Generalized Gradient
Schemes for the Measurement of Two-Dimensional Image Motion,
Biol.Cybern. 63 421-431; Johnston, McOwan, Benton, 1999,
Robust velocity computation from a biologically motivated model
of motion perception, *Proc.R.Soc.Lond B* 266 509-518).

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[00028] The advantage of the present invention resides in the use of
relatively cheap software rather than the more complicated and thus
more expensive hardware approaches of the prior art.

15
[00029] A further advantage of the present invention is the
construction of depth information does not rely on the perception
of the operator, but is automated and thus allows for objective
classification and easy communication and storage.

20
[00030] The present invention has a principal application in the field
of security scanning as used at airports and points of entry, or in
public buildings generally. However, the scanning technique and
the device can also be used for medical scanning. It can also have
25 application generally for example in scanning objects in a desktop
environment to generate wire-frame models.

CLAIMS

- 5 1. A method of scanning using X-ray equipment characterised
by the steps of projecting two X-ray beams towards a
moving or static object, sensing the images generated from
the X-ray beams, detecting two spatial dimensions from the
images, developing motion and intensity maps from the two
10 spatial dimensions thereby to generate by the use of
algorithms the third spatial dimension and to provide a data
set for the construction of a 3D image for display on a
viewing monitor.
- 15 2. A method according to Claim 1 characterised in that the
object is carried on a conveyor belt.
- 20 3. A method according to Claim 2 characterised by the step of
developing the third spatial dimension from moving
representations of the flat screened object by calculating
motion parallax maps for the intensity map which can be
converted into depth coordinates using the fixed geometry of
the conveyor belt or calibration markers on the conveyor
belt.
- 25 4. A method according to Claim 1 characterised in that for
two static images generated by the line scanners, the
disparity map for the intensity maps is calculated from two
parallel detector arrays and converted into depth coordinates
30 using conventional stereo-algorithms and the fixed geometry
of the X-ray equipment.

5. A method according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in that the data set is generated and comprises 3D coordinates for all visible object contours from which parallel projections in the three cardinal directions can be constructed.
6. A method according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in that algorithms are provided to allow real-time rotation of the 3D data set to permit continuous manipulation for the viewing angle by the operator.
7. A method according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in that algorithms are provided to allow the 3D images of the scanned object to be transferred into projection images.
8. A method according to Claim 7 characterised in that the algorithms are adapted to allow the adoption of any viewing angle.
9. An X-ray scanning device (1) for a static or moving object (O) for use in the method according to any one of the preceding claims characterised by an X-ray source (4) providing two or more X-ray beams (6, 8), and a sensor array (10, 12) provided for each beam (6, 8), the arrays (10, 12) being displaced spatially one from the other, the arrays being adapted to generate two two-dimensional images, a computer incorporating software adapted to calculate a third, depth dimension thereby to create a 3D image of the object, and a monitor for displaying the 3D image.

10. A device according to Claim 10 characterised in that the device (1) includes a conveyor belt (2) for carrying the object (O), and the sensor arrays (10, 12) are spatially disposed to capture two images of the moving object (O) to generate an intensity map and a motion map.

11. A device according to Claim 11 characterised in that the conveyor belt (2) is provided with calibration markers to provide a self-calibrating system.

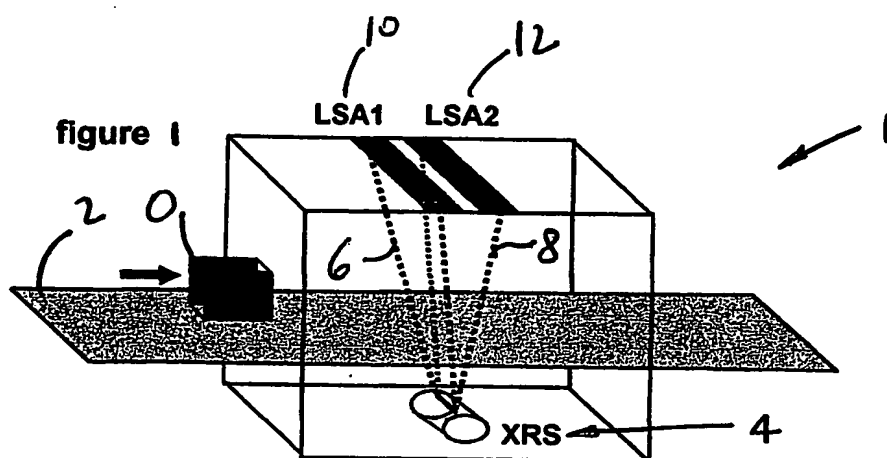
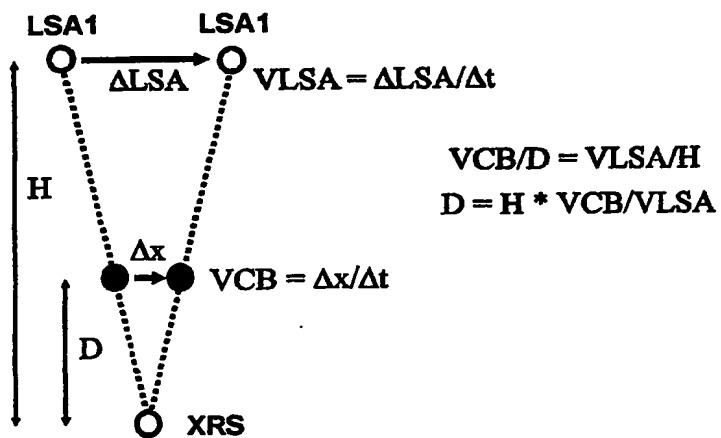


figure 2



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internat. Application No
PCT/GB 03/02572

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 G01N23/04 H04N13/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 G01N H04N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, INSPEC

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 6 081 580 A (ADAMS WILLIAM L ET AL) 27 June 2000 (2000-06-27) column 1, line 9 -column 5, line 39; figures 1-3	1-5,9-11
X	EVANS J P O ET AL: "3-D X-ray image modelling. Latest developments" SECURITY TECHNOLOGY, 1997. PROCEEDINGS. THE INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS 31ST ANNUAL 1997 INTERNATIONAL CARNAHAN CONFERENCE ON CANBERRA, ACT, AUSTRALIA 15-17 OCT. 1997, NEW YORK, NY, USA, IEEE, US, 15 October 1997 (1997-10-15), pages 183-187, XP010248875 ISBN: 0-7803-3913-4 page 184 -page 185; figures 1-6 -/--	1-11

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internal Application No
PCT/GB 03/02572

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EVANS P ET AL: "Three-dimensional X-ray imaging techniques" STEREOSCOPIC DISPLAYS AND VIRTUAL REALITY SYSTEMS, SAN JOSE, CA, USA, 8-10 FEB. 1994, vol. 2177, pages 161-165, XP009016631 Proceedings of the SPIE - The International Society for Optical Engineering, 1994, USA ISSN: 0277-786X page 161 -page 162, paragraph 1; figure 3 -----	1-11
A	EP 0 261 984 A (ROBINSON MAX) 30 March 1988 (1988-03-30) column 3, line 32 -column 6, line 4; figures 2,3 -----	11
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